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God won't rescue world from ëstupidity'

Al Webb Religion News Service | Mar. 29, 2009

LONDON -- Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, in one of his sharpest attacks yet on threats to the environment, has warned that God will not save mankind from his own environmental "stupidity."

The spiritual leader of the world's 77 million-member Anglican Communion said in a lecture at England's York Minster on Wednesday (March 25) that the world faces "a whole range of doomsday prospects," ranging from global warming to threats from what he called "bio-terror" weapons.

In such end-of-the-world scenarios, Williams said, "the ultimate tragedy is that a material world capable of being a manifestation ... of divine love is choked, drowned or starved by its own stupidity."

But "to suggest that God might intervene to protect us from the corporate folly of our practices is as un-Christian and un-biblical as to suggest that he protects us from the results of our individual folly or sin."

The archbishop warned that while God's faithfulness remains steadfast "even in the most appalling disaster," that still "will not be a safety net that guarantees us a happy ending in this world."

What's needed, he said, is a "radical change of heart" on the part of mankind to ponders its "terrible freedom" and decide the fate that will ultimately befall it.

Williams was supported by Andy Atkins, executive director of the Friends of the Earth environmentalist group, who said "humans are responsible for escalating climate change."

"We have a choice as to how we respond," Atkins told journalists, "but we and future generations will live with the consequences of this generation's choice."

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